

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of Mr. LaVogue and his students, and I am pleased to name them true Hastings' Heroes.

HONORING TUOLUMNE BAND OF
ME-WUK INDIANS

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 19, 2011

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians for the integral part they played in bringing the 2011 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree to Washington, DC.

Since 1970, it has become an honor for one of the National Forests to be asked to provide the Capitol Tree. The appointed National Forest, in turn, engages help from diverse partners throughout its respective State. The opportunity to provide the Capitol Christmas Tree becomes a state-wide celebration and civic event, leaving a lasting impression on all who are fortunate enough to be involved.

2011 is only the fourth time California has contributed the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree, the last time was in 1995. Known as "The People's Tree," the 2011 Capitol Christmas Tree was harvested from the Stanislaus National Forest located in the Central Sierra Nevada Mountains. The Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians performed a blessing of the tree prior to it being harvested. The members of the tribe cut and laid the tree down on a special cradle without breaking a branch in the frigid 17 degree weather.

In addition to assisting with the harvesting and blessing of the 2011 Capitol Christmas Tree, the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians also harvested and blessed their own tree. The 20-foot tall White Spruce was hand-picked by the Elders to be donated to the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. It is the first time that a Native American tribe from California has donated a tree to the museum. It traveled 4,280 miles from California to Washington, DC making 23 stops along the way. At two of the stops, the Me-Wuk's had tribal gift exchanges with two other Indian tribes. The tree's arrival received international press and showed the rest of the world that our nation has the freedom to celebrate a religious holiday at the Capitol.

A notable moment for the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians was being able to perform a tribal dance in the Library of Congress. Their performance marks the first time that a Native American tribe has danced in the historic building. The dancers that participated were Robert Millis, Louis Millis, Robert Burciaga, Miguel Campos, Joey Guinn, Shanta Millis, Tricia Guinn, Heather Palmer, Darla Berg, Janell Lavell, Melissa Wiest, Lucy Parker, and Ursula Jones. Special Recognition should be extended to Reba Fuller, the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians Government Specialist, who worked tirelessly on the project and traveled with the tree until it was properly placed.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring and commending the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians for their historic journey with the 2011 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1540,
NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZA-
TION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I will vote for H.R. 1540, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, because it contains a number of important advancements. I am extremely disappointed, however, that we were unable to achieve more in our effort to change U.S. policy on the treatment of detainees.

H.R. 1540 contains a number of areas of progress, including a pay increase for our troops, important new protections for military personnel who are victims of sexual assault, concrete requirements for the Department of Defense to strengthen its audit-readiness, and increased cooperation with Israel on ballistic missile defense. In addition, it contains the toughest sanctions yet on the Central Bank of Iran to pressure the Iranian regime from continuing its pursuit of nuclear weapons. And, it blunts the defense spending increases of past years with significant cuts that are consistent with the end of the war in Iraq and the winding down of our involvement in Afghanistan.

When the House first considered H.R. 1540 earlier this year, I voted against it because of its misguided language on detainees. The bill's provision for military detention of American citizens was simply antithetical to American values. I joined with nearly three dozen Members of Congress in urging that the language on detainees be removed from the final version of the legislation.

I commend President Obama for insisting on a number of improvements, including a prohibition on military detention of U.S. citizens and lawful residents, the removal of language that would have banned the use of civilian courts to prosecute Qaeda suspects, and the elimination of language that would have provided an expanded authorization for the use of military force.

For these reasons I will vote for H.R. 1540. I will closely monitor the law's implementation, however, and press for further changes that are needed to protect our civil liberties and the rule of law, which Americans have fought to preserve at such great cost.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL HOME-
LESS PERSONS' MEMORIAL DAY

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 19, 2011

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day, which will be observed on December 21, 2011. This day has been observed annually since 1990 to remember those who have lost their lives due to the tragedy of homelessness, and to bring attention to the need to end homelessness. Last December, the House of Representatives passed H. Con. Res. 325, a resolution that I introduced that supports the goals and ideals

of National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day. I am proud to recognize this important day again this year, and express my deepest sympathies to those who have lost loved ones to this tragedy.

The current state of our economy has greatly exacerbated national homelessness. It is estimated that over half a million people experience homelessness on any given night in the United States. Of those in the homeless population, 12 percent are veterans, and 17 percent are considered chronically homeless. These numbers highlight the fact that we are witnessing a growing human rights crisis right here at home. This is a crisis that cannot be ignored.

Mr. Speaker, as Co-Founder and Co-Chairman of the Congressional Caucus on Homelessness, I understand that we must and can do more to end homelessness. I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing National Homeless Persons' Memorial to prevent and end homelessness.

HONORING G. KENNETH CAR-
PENTER AND HAROLD FARRING-
TON, JR., ON THEIR INDUCTION
TO THE VETERANS HALL OF
FAME

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 19, 2011

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor, recognize, and congratulate G. Kenneth Carpenter and Harold Farrington, Jr., on their induction into the Veterans Hall of Fame.

In 1967, Kenneth volunteered to serve his country in Vietnam. After returning home, he found his calling and joined the clergy. During his 25 years as Senior Minister at Mystic's Union Baptist Church, Mr. Carpenter dedicated himself to his community. He helped found the Mystic Area Shelter & Hospitality, providing a safe haven to more than 800 people and preventing hundreds more from becoming homeless. He also led the group that created the Sunshine Kitchen in Groton, which served free meals to local people in need for 18 years. In addition, Mr. Carpenter co-founded the Southeastern Connecticut Clergy Association to encourage people of different faiths to work together and volunteered to counsel veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Harold Farrington, Jr., served in the Army's combat infantry in Vietnam. In 1968, he returned home after a mortar round blew up in his left hand. Mr. Farrington spent five years undergoing painful bone and skin grafts and tendon transplants. Harold was so impressed with the care he received from the Veterans benefits counselor that he decided to go work for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Over the next 30 years, Mr. Farrington was dedicated to ensuring that veterans and their families were able to receive the disability compensation, benefits, and services to which they were entitled. Harold established Veteran's Services offices at the Naval Submarine Base in Groton, the Coast Guard Academy in New London and the Naval Station in Newport, RI, to help service-members transition to civilian life.

The exemplary contributions that G. Kenneth Carpenter and Harold Farrington, Jr.,